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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2694  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS TUNIS 000205

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR NEA/MAG - HOPKINS, HARRIS AND NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [TS](#)  
SUBJECT: MFA STATEMENT ON AL AQSA EXCAVATIONS

¶1. (SBU) In keeping with Tunisia's moderate position on Israeli-Palestinian issues, on February 8 the MFA issued a statement, announced by the Tunisia Africa Press Agency (TAP), expressing its "concern" about Israeli excavations around the al-Aqsa Mosque.

¶2. (U) STATEMENT TEXT (OFFICIAL TAP TRANSLATION):

Begin Text:

Tunis, Feb. 8 (TAP) - The foreign ministry, on Thursday, made public the following communique:

"Tunisia is following with deep concern the excavations and demolition works carried out by Israel near the holy mosque of Al Aqsa, which works are aimed at distorting the architecture of this sacred historical monument and harming its Islamic identity.

Tunisia considers that these works represent a provocation to the feelings of the Islamic nation and are likely to further stir up tension in the region and undermine the international and regional efforts aimed at reviving the peace process.

While reiterating its constant position of support to the Palestinian cause and expressing its conviction of the peoples' rights to preserve and glorify their sacred religious symbols, Tunisia condemns these repeated violations and urges the international community to exert pressure on the Israeli government so that it would put an immediate end to the excavation and demolition works carried out near the holy Al Quds."

End Text.  
GODEC